sewing basics

GETTING STARTED
Basic tools, techniques, & terms you'll need for the projects in this issue.

SEWING KIT

The following items are essential for your sewing kit. Make sure you have these tools at hand before starting any of the projects:

- ○ **ACRYLIC RULER** This is a clear flat ruler, with a measuring grid at least 2" wide × 18" long. A rigid acrylic (quilter's) ruler should be used when working with a rotary cutter.
- ○ **CLOTH MEASURING TAPE** Make sure it's at least 60" long.
- ○ **CRAFT SCISSORS** Use these for cutting out paper patterns.
- ○ **DRESSMAKER'S SHEARS** These sharp long-bladed scissors are used to cut fabric.
- ○ **EMBROIDERY SCISSORS** These small scissors are used to trim off threads, clip corners, and do other intricate cutting work.
- ○ **FABRIC MARKING PENS & PENCILS** Available in several colors for use on light and dark fabrics; use them for tracing patterns and pattern markings onto your fabric.
- ○ **HANDSEWING & EMBROIDERY NEEDLES** Keep an assortment of sewing and embroidery needles in different sizes, from fine to sturdy.
- ○ **IRON, IRONING BOARD & PRESS CLOTHS** An iron is an essential tool when sewing. Use cotton muslin or silk organza as a press cloth to protect delicate fabric surfaces from direct heat.
- ○ **PATTERN PAPER** Have some pattern paper or other large paper (such as newsprint, butcher paper, or pattern tracing cloth) on hand for tracing the patterns from the pattern insert. Regular office paper may be used for templates that will fit.
- ○ **PINKING SHEARS** These scissors with notched teeth leave a zigzag edge on the cut cloth to prevent fraying.
- ○ **SEAM GAUGE** This small ruler with a movable slider is used for marking hems, checking seam allowances, placing buttons, and more.
- ○ **SEAM RIPPER** Handy for quickly ripping out stitches.
- ○ **SPIKED TRACING WHEEL & COLORED TRACING PAPER** Use these tools for tracing patterns and markings onto your fabric.
- ○ **STRAIGHT PINS & PINCUSHION** Always keep lots of pins nearby.
- ○ **WEIGHTS** Pattern weights or small rocks are great for keeping fabric in place while drawing, pinning, and cutting.

* OPTIONAL . . . but good to have.

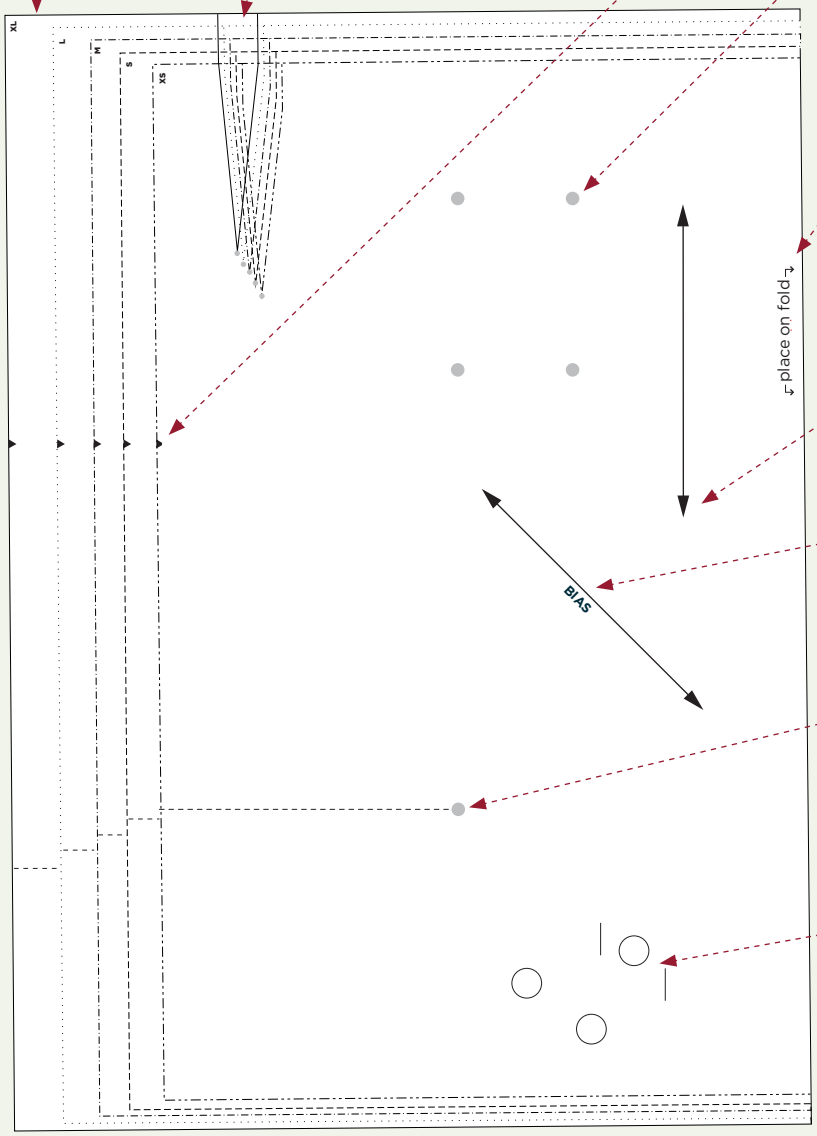
- ○ **FRENCH CURVE** A template of metal, plastic, or wood that includes many curved edges for constructing smooth curves.
- ○ **NEEDLE THREADER** An inexpensive aid to make threading the eye of the needle super fast.
- ○ **POINT TURNER** A bluntly pointed tool that helps push out the corners of a project and/or smooth seams. A knitting needle or chopstick can also be used.
- ○ **ROTARY CUTTER & SELF-HEALING MAT** Useful for cutting out fabric quickly. Always use the mat to protect the blade and your work surface. (A rigid acrylic ruler should be used with these to make straight cuts).
- ○ **TAILOR'S CHALK** Available in triangular pieces, rollers, and pencils in various colors, tailor's chalk is useful for marking cloth. Some forms (such as powdered) can simply be brushed away; refer to manufacturer's instructions for recommended removal method.
- ○ **TAILOR'S HAM** A firm cushion used when pressing curved areas of garments to preserve the shape and prevent creases.
- ○ **THIMBLE** Your fingers and thumbs will thank you.
- ○ **ZIPPER FOOT** This accessory foot for your machine has a narrow profile that can be positioned to sew close to the zipper teeth. Zipper feet are adjustable so the foot can be moved to either side of the needle.

PATTERN SYMBOLS & MARKINGS

Here is a quick reference guide to the symbols and markings on the patterns.

CUTTING LINES Multisize patterns have different cutting lines for each size.

DARTS Angled lines show where the stitching will be, and the dot shows you the position of the dart point (signaling the point, at the end of the dart, where your stitching should end).



NOTCHES Notches are triangle-shaped symbols used for accurately matching seams. Pieces to be joined will have corresponding notches.

PATTERN DOTS Filled circles indicate that a mark needs to be made (often on the right side of the fabric), for placement of elements such as a pocket or a dart point. Mark by punching through the pattern paper only, then mark on the fabric through the hole.

PLACE ON FOLD BRACKET This is a grainline marking with arrows pointing to the edge of the pattern. Place the pattern edge on the fold of the fabric so that your finished piece will be twice the size of the pattern piece, without having to add a seam. Do not cut the fold.

GRAINLINE The double-ended arrow should be parallel to the lengthwise grain or fold unless marked as crosswise.

BIAS GRAINLINE This grainline is diagonal and indicates that the pattern piece should be cut on the bias. The "true" bias is at a 45-degree angle to the straight grain of the fabric.

SLASH LINE The dashed line indicates that the pattern needs to be slashed along the line. Slash to the dots only, if present. If there are no dots, the pattern should be slashed from edge to edge along the entire line.

BUTTON & BUTTONHOLE PLACEMENT MARKS Solid lines indicate buttonholes. A large open circle is the button symbol and shows placement.

CB: Center Back
CF: Center Front

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PATTERN INSERT GUIDE A quick reference to the full-size patterns on the insert.

LAYOUT, MARKING + CUTTING GUIDELINES

1 The pattern insert features overlapping patterns, so you may not want to cut patterns or templates directly from the insert. Instead, use pattern paper (or other paper such as newsprint) or pattern tracing cloth to trace the pattern pieces you need from the insert and then cut out your traced pieces. Regular office paper may be used for small templates that will fit. If necessary, use a light box or bright window for tracing.

2 If you are cutting pattern pieces on the fold or cutting two of the same pattern piece, fold the fabric in half, selvedge to selvedge, with right sides together or as indicated in the cutting layout or instructions.

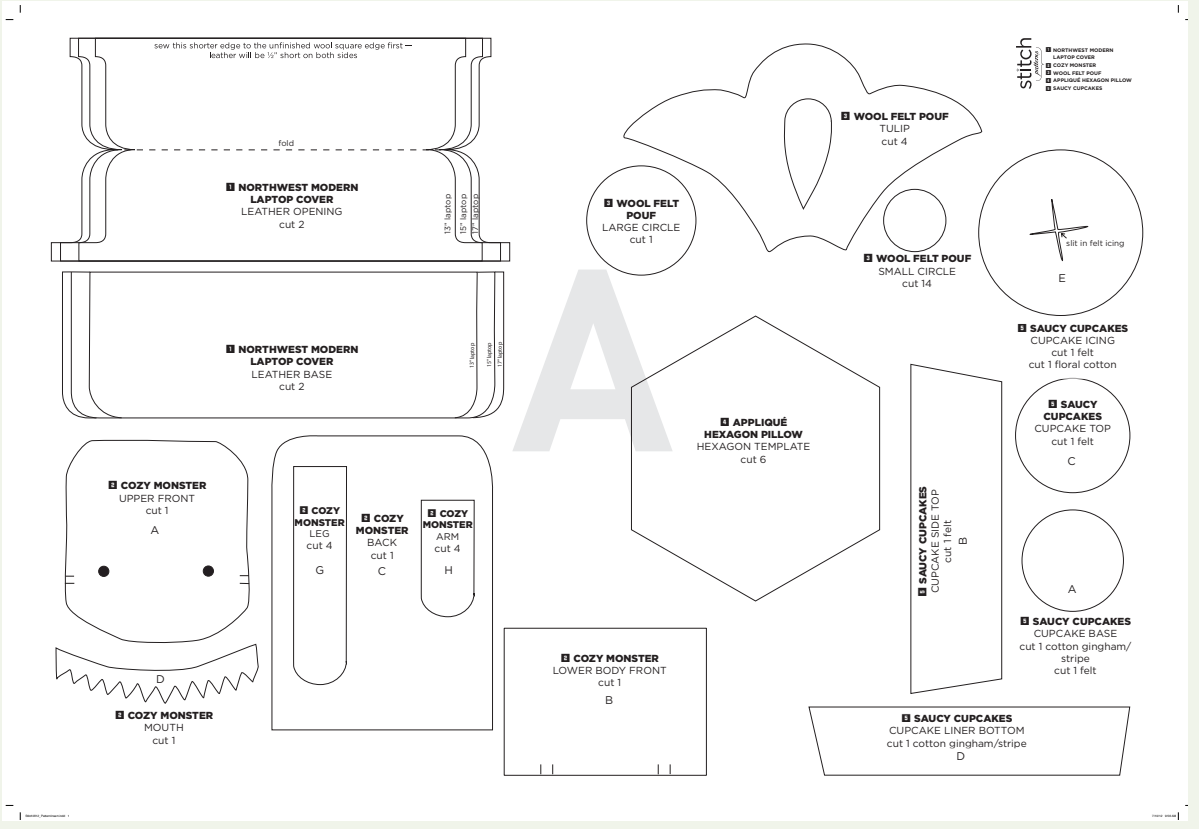
3 All pattern markings should be on the wrong side of the fabric unless otherwise noted.

4 Lay the pattern pieces on the fabric as close together as possible. Double-check that all pattern pieces cut "on the fold" are placed on the fold.

5 Make sure all pattern pieces are placed on the fabric with the grainline running parallel to the lengthwise grain unless a bias grainline is present or as otherwise noted.

6 Use weights to hold the pattern pieces down and use pins to secure the corners as needed.

7 Cut pieces slowly and carefully.



GLOSSARY OF SEWING TERMS + TECHNIQUES

A quick reference to the technical sewing terms used throughout the project instructions.

BACKTACK Stitching in reverse for a short distance at the beginning and ending of a seam line to secure the stitches. Most machines have a button or knob for this function *(also called backstitch).*

BARTACK A line of reinforcement stitching often placed at areas of stress on a garment. Bartacks are created with short zigzag stitches (by machine) or whipstitches (by hand).

BASTING Long, loose stitches to hold something in place temporarily. To baste by machine, use the longest straight-stitch length available on your machine. To baste by hand, use stitches at least ¼" long. Use a contrasting thread to make the stitches easier to spot for removal.

BIAS The direction across a fabric that is located at a 45-degree angle from the lengthwise or crosswise grain. The bias has high stretch and a very fluid drape.

BIAS TAPE Made from fabric strips cut on a 45-degree angle to the straight grain, the bias cut creates an edging fabric that will stretch to enclose smooth or curved edges. You can buy bias tape ready-made or make your own.

CLIPPING Involves cutting tiny slits or triangles into the seam allowance of curved edges so the seam will lie flat when turned right side out. Cut slits along concave curves and triangles (with points toward the seam line) along a convex curve. Be careful not to clip into the stitches.

DART This stitched triangular fold is used to give shape and form to the fabric to fit body curves.

EASE/EASE IN When a pattern directs to "ease" or "ease in," you are generally sewing a longer piece of fabric to a shorter piece or a curved piece to a straight piece. This creates shape in a garment or object without pleats or gathers. To ease, match the ends or notches of the uneven section and pin together (or pin as instructed by the pattern). Continue to pin the remaining fabric together, distributing the extra fullness evenly, but making sure that the seamlines match up as smoothly as possible (you will be smoothing the excess fullness away from the edge); don't be afraid to use a lot of pins. Stitch slowly, smoothing as necessary to ease the pieces together as evenly as possible, being careful not to catch tucks in the seam.

EDGESTITCH A row of topstitching placed very close (1/16– ⅛") to an edge or an existing seam line.

FABRIC GRAIN The grain is created in a woven fabric by the threads that travel lengthwise and crosswise. The lengthwise grain runs parallel to the selvedges; the crosswise grain should always be perpendicular to the lengthwise threads. If the grains aren't completely straight and perpendicular, grasp the fabric at diagonally opposite corners and pull gently to restore the grain. In knit fabrics, the lengthwise grain runs along the wales (ribs), parallel to the selvedges, with the crosswise grain running along the courses (perpendicular to the wales).

FINGER-PRESS Pressing a fold or crease with your fingers as opposed to using an iron.

GATHERING STITCH (machine) These are long stitches used to compress a length of fabric before sewing it to a shorter piece. To gather, set the machine for a long stitch length (3.0–4.0 mm; use the shorter length for lighter-weight fabrics) and loosen the tension slightly. With the fabric right side up, sew on the seam line and again ⅛" from the seam line, within the seam allowance. Sometimes you will be instructed to place the first line of stitches ⅛" from the seam line within the body of the garment so the stitches don't become tangled in the permanent seam line. Leave thread tails at each end and do not backtack. Pin the fabric to be gathered to the shorter piece right sides together, matching edges, centers, and pattern markings as directed in the pattern. Pin at each mark. Grasp the bobbin threads from both lines of stitching at one end and pull gently. Work the gathers along the thread until the entire piece is gathered and lies flat against the shorter fabric piece. Pull the bobbin threads from both ends to gather long pieces. Stitch the seam, then remove the gathering threads.

GRADING SEAM ALLOWANCES The process of trimming seam allowances to different widths to reduce bulk and allow the seam to lie flat. The seam allowance that will lie to the interior of the project is trimmed the most, leaving the seam allowance that will lie closer to the exterior of the project slightly wider.

GRAINLINE A pattern marking showing the direction of the grain. Make sure the grainline marked on the pattern runs parallel to the lengthwise grain of your fabric, unless the grainline is specifically marked as crosswise or bias.

INTERFACING/INTERLINING Material used to stabilize or reinforce fabrics. Fusible interfacing has an adhesive coating on one side that adheres to fabric when ironed. Interlining is an additional fabric layer between the shell and lining, used to change the garment drape or add structure or warmth.

LINING The inner fabric of a garment or bag, used to create a finished interior that covers the raw edges of the seams.

MITER Joining a seam or fold at an angle that bisects the project corner. Most common is a 45-degree angle, like a picture frame, but shapes other than squares or rectangles will have miters with different angles.

OVERCAST STITCH A machine stitch that wraps around the fabric raw edge to finish edges and prevent raveling. Some sewing machines have several overcast stitch options; consult your sewing machine manual for information on stitch settings and the appropriate presser foot for the chosen stitch (often the standard presser foot can be used). A zigzag stitch can be used as an alternative to finish raw edges if your machine doesn't have an overcast-stitch function.

PINK To trim with pinking shears, which cut the edge into a zigzag pattern to reduce fraying.

PLACKET A placket is a finished garment opening, most often at the location of a garment closure. A placket can be finished by hemming or with binding or a facing. Plackets are often seen on sleeve vents (above the cuff) and are also used at neckline and waist edge openings, often in conjunction with buttons or other closures.

PRESHRINK Many fabrics shrink when washed; you need to wash, dry, and press all your fabric before you start to sew, following the suggested cleaning method marked on the fabric bolt. Don't skip this step!

RIGHT SIDE (RS) The front side, or the side that should be on the outside of a finished garment. On a print fabric, the print will be stronger on the right side of the fabric.

RIGHT SIDES TOGETHER The right sides of two fabric layers should be facing each other.

SATIN STITCH (MACHINE) This is a smooth, completely filled column of zigzag stitches achieved by setting the stitch length to 0.2–0.4 mm. The length setting should be short enough for complete coverage but long enough to prevent bunching and thread buildup.

SEAM ALLOWANCE The amount of fabric between the raw edge and the seam.

SELVEDGE This is the tightly woven border on the lengthwise edges of woven fabric and the finished lengthwise edges of knit fabric.

SHELL The outer fabric of a garment or bag (as opposed to the lining, which will be on the inside).

SLIP BASTING A temporary slip stitch used for basting in curved areas, or for matching plaids or stripes in preparation for sewing seams (it can also be used to baste zippers in place by hand). With a folded-under edge lying along the seam line, on top of a flat (unfolded) edge, take stitches about ¼" (6 mm) long, alternating between the folded edge and the flat edge.

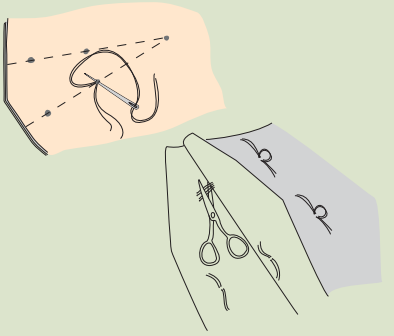
SQUARING UP After you have pieced together a fabric block or section, check to make sure the edges are straight and the measurements are correct. Use a rotary cutter and a rigid acrylic ruler to trim the block if necessary. Because you might trim off the backtacking on seams when you square up, machine stitch across any trimmed seams to secure.

STAYSTITCHING A line of straight stitching (through one layer of fabric), used to stabilize the fabric and prevent stretching or distortion. Staystitching is usually placed just inside the seam line, often at curved edges such as armholes.

STITCH IN THE DITCH Press a previously sewn seam open or to one side. Lay the seamed fabric right side up under the presser foot and sew along the seamline "ditch." The stitches will fall between the two fabric pieces and disappear into the seam.

TOPSTITCH Used to hold pieces firmly in place and/or to add a decorative effect, a topstitch is simply a stitch that can be seen on the outside of the garment or piece. To topstitch, make a line of stitching on the outside (right side) of the piece, usually a set distance from an existing seam.

UNDERLINING Fabric used as a backing for the shell of a garment to add structure and/or aid in shaping. It is also sometimes used to make a transparent fabric opaque. Underlinings are cut to the size and shape of each garment piece and the two are basted together and treated as one during construction.



TAILOR'S TACKS

Used for transferring markings from a pattern to garment sections, these handy thread snippets are easily removed without damage. Take several loose stitches through the pattern and fabric layers leaving about a 1" loop of thread. After all symbols have been marked, separate the fabric layers and snip the thread between; carefully remove the pattern.

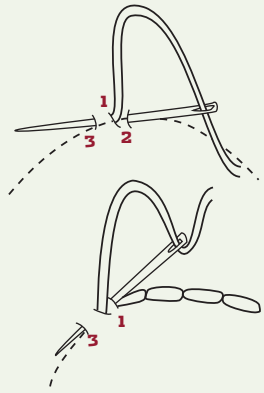
A similar method is to take a small stitch, at the point to be marked, through all layers and leaving a tail of about 1". Take another small stitch, through all layers, directly over the previous stitch, leaving the thread loose to create about a 1" loop. When marks are all complete and the pattern paper has been removed, separate the fabric layers so that the thread loop is extended between the layers. Cut the threads, leaving a tailor's tack in each layer.

UNDERSTITCHING A line of stitches placed on a facing (or lining), very near the facing/garment seam. Understitching is used to hold the seam allowances and facing together and to prevent the facing from rolling toward the outside of the garment.

WRONG SIDE (WS) The wrong side of the fabric is the underside, or the side that should be on the inside of a finished garment. On a print fabric, the print will be lighter or less obvious on the wrong side of the fabric.

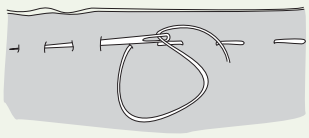
STITCH GLOSSARY

A quick reference to the handstitches used throughout the project instructions.



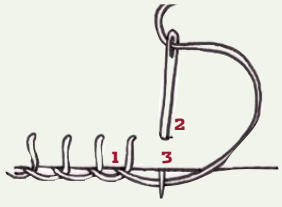
BACKSTITCH ▲

Working from right to left, bring the needle up at **1** and insert behind the starting point at **2**. Bring the needle up at **3**, repeat by inserting at **1** and bringing the needle up at a point that is a stitch length beyond **3**.



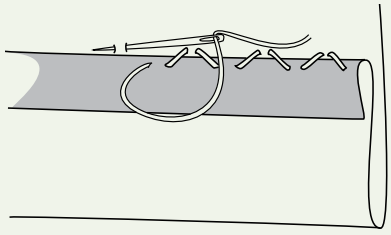
BASTING ▲

Used to temporarily hold layers together, a basting stitch is simply a long running stitch. Stitches should be about ¼" long and evenly spaced.



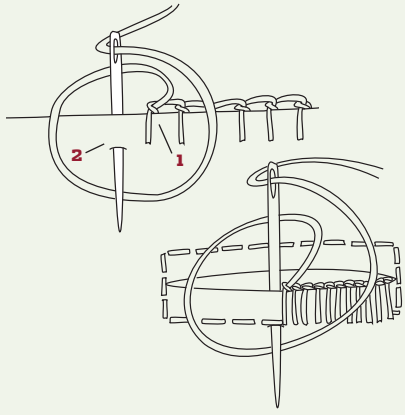
BLANKET STITCH ▲

Working from left to right, bring the needle up at **1** and insert at **2**. Bring the needle back up at **3** and over the working thread. Repeat by making the next stitch in the same manner, keeping the spacing even.



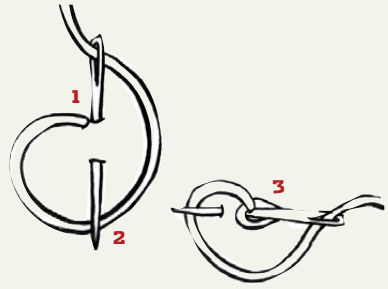
BLINDSTITCH/BLIND-HEM STITCH ▲

Used mainly for hemming fabrics where an inconspicuous hem is difficult to achieve (this stitch is also useful for securing binding on the wrong side). Fold the hem edge back about ¼". Take a small stitch in the garment, picking up only a few threads.



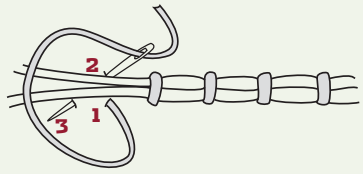
BUTTONHOLE STITCH ▲

Working from right to left and with the point of the needle toward you, bring the needle above the fabric edge at **1**, loop the thread to the left, then down and to the right, inserting the needle from the wrong side at **2**, keeping the loop of thread behind the needle at both the top and bottom. Pull the needle through, tightening the stitch so that the looped thread lies along the edge of the fabric. Do not tighten so much that the tops of the stitches pull together. When using the buttonhole stitch to finish a hand buttonhole, work the stitches so that they are very closely spaced.



CHAIN STITCH ▲

Working from top to bottom, bring the needle up and then reinsert at **1** to create a loop; do not pull the thread taut. Bring the needle back up at **2**, keeping the needle above the loop and gently pulling the needle toward you to tighten the loop flush to the fabric (leave a little slack in the thread to keep the loop round). Repeat by inserting the needle at **2** to form a loop and bringing the needle up at **3**. Tack the last loop down with a straight stitch.



COUCHING ▲

Working from right to left, use one thread, known as the couching or working thread, to tack down one or more laid threads, known as the couched threads. Bring the working thread up at **1** and insert at **2**, over the laid threads to tack them down; repeat by inserting the needle at **3**. This stitch may also be worked from left to right, and the spacing between the couching threads may vary for different design effects.

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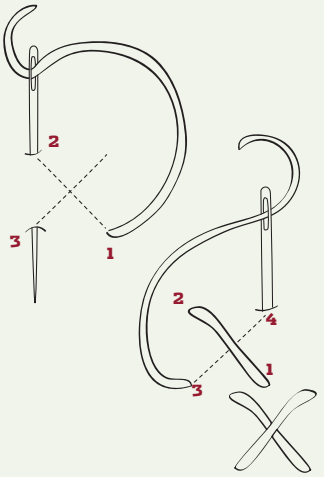
CROSS-STITCH ▼

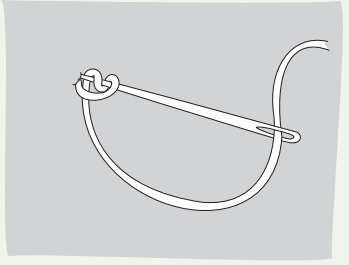
Working from right to left, bring the needle up at **1**, insert at **2**, then bring the needle back up at **3**. Finish by inserting the needle at **4**. Repeat for the desired number of stitches.

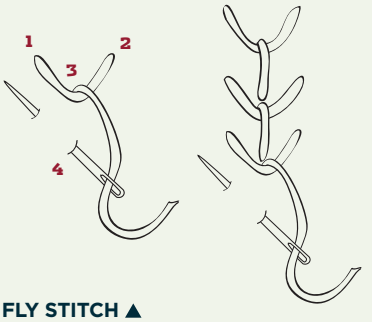


ENDING UP ▼

At the end of a line of permanent handstitching, take a small stitch and pull the needle and thread through the loop. Take another short backstitch and repeat. Clip the thread ends close to the stitches. For basting or other temporary markings, make a single knot or simply leave a long thread end to allow for easy removal.

NOTE Another option is to take a small stitch on the fabric's wrong side, wrap the thread around the needle several times, then pull the needle through to secure the knot close to the fabric surface.



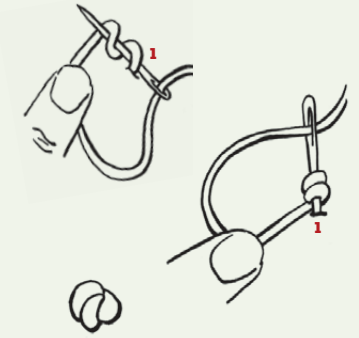


FLY STITCH ▲

Working from left to right, bring the needle up at **1** and insert at **2**, leaving the thread loose. Bring the needle back up at **3**, keeping the needle above the thread and pulling the needle toward you gently to tighten the thread so that it is flush with the fabric. Tack the thread down by inserting the needle at **4**. Repeat for the desired number of stitches.

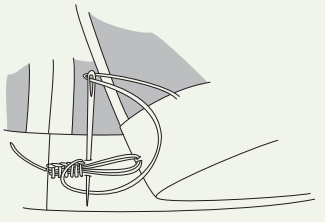
FRENCH KNOT ▼

Bring the needle up at **1** and hold the thread taut above the fabric. Point the needle toward your fingers and move the needle in a circular motion to wrap the thread around the needle once or twice. Insert the needle near **1** and hold the thread taut near the knot as you pull the needle and thread through the knot and the fabric to complete.



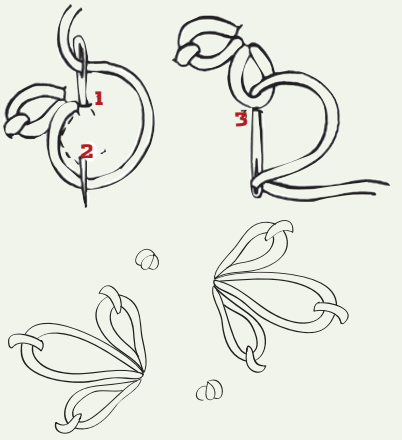
FRENCH TACK ▼

Take a small stitch in the garment and then take a small stitch in the lining or facing, directly across from the first stitch, leaving 1" to 2" of thread between the two. Take a few more small stitches in each spot to build up a thread spacer that is several threads thick. Work a tight blanket stitch over the thread spacer (see Blanket Stitch).



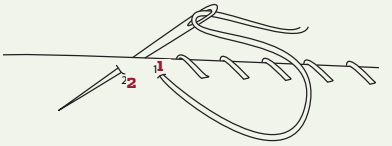
LAZY DAISY STITCH ▼

Working from top to bottom, bring the needle up at **1** and create a loop by reinserting at **1**; do not pull the thread taut. Bring the needle back up at **2**, keeping the needle above the loop and pulling the needle toward you gently to tighten the loop so that it is flush with the fabric. Tack the loop down by inserting the needle at **3**. Repeat for the desired number of stitches.



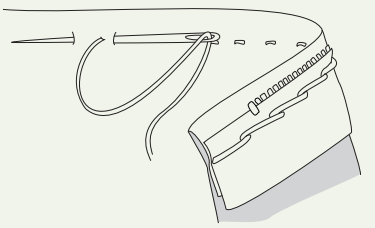
OVERCAST STITCH ▼

Keeping your stitches at consistent depth and spacing, take a diagonal stitch by bringing the needle through the fabric at **1**, wrapping the thread over the edge, and then bringing the needle through the fabric again at **2**, to the side of the previous stitch. The result is a diagonal stitch that wraps around the edge.



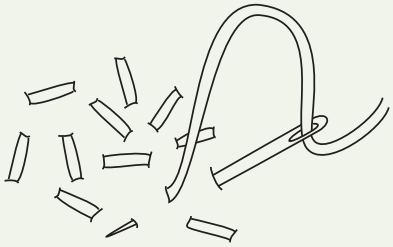
PRICK STITCH/PICK STITCH ▼

Prick stitch is worked just like a backstitch, except that the stitches are spaced ⅛" to ¼" on the right side (taking longer stitches on the wrong side). When used for topstitching, Pick stitch is worked only through the top layer of fabric so that the stitch is not seen on the interior or underlayer.



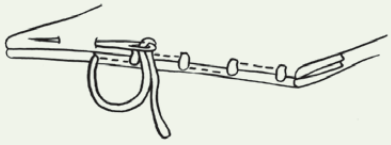
SEED STITCHES /SEEDING STITCH ▼

Small straight stitches worked in clusters or scattered at random. Seed stitches can also be worked tightly together and all in the same direction to uniformly fill a space.



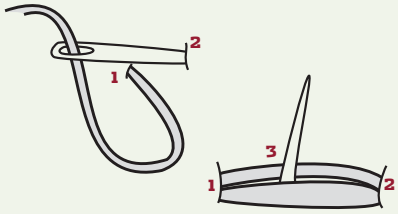
SLIP STITCH ▼

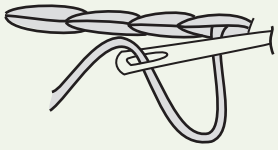
Working from right to left, join two pieces of fabric by taking a 1/16–¼" long stitch into the folded edge of one piece of fabric and bringing the needle out. Insert the needle into the folded edge of the other piece of fabric, directly across from the point where the thread emerged from the previous stitch. Repeat by inserting the needle into the first piece of fabric. The thread will be almost entirely hidden inside the folds of the fabrics.

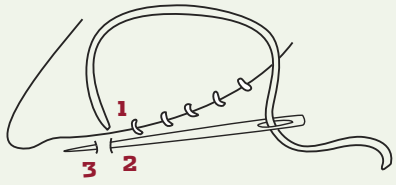


SPLIT STITCH ▼

Working from left to right, bring the needle up at **1**, insert at **2**, and bring the needle up near the right end of the previous stitch (between **1** and **2**, at **3**), inserting the needle into the thread to split the thread in two. When you're working with multiple strands of thread, insert the needle between the strands.

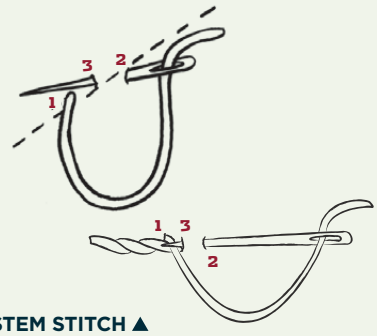






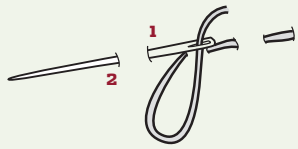
STANDARD HAND-APPLIQUÉ STITCH ▲

Cut a length of thread 12"–18". Thread the newly cut end through the eye of the needle, pull this end through, and knot it. Use this technique to thread the needle and knot the thread to help keep the thread's "twist" intact and to reduce knotting. Beginning at the straightest edge of the appliqué and working from right to left, bring the needle up from the underside, through the background fabric and the very edge of the appliqué at **1**, catching only a few threads of the appliqué fabric. Pull the thread taut, then insert the needle into the background fabric at **2**, as close as possible to **1**. Bring the needle up through the background fabric at **3**, ⅛" beyond **2**. Continue in this manner, keeping the thread taut (do not pull it so tight that the fabric puckers) to keep the stitching as invisible as possible.



STEM STITCH ▲

Working from left to right, bring the needle up at **1** and insert it ⅛–¼" away at **2** (do not pull taut). Bring the needle up halfway between **1** and **2**, at **3**. Keeping the needle above the loop just created, pull the stitch taut. Repeat by inserting the needle ⅛–¼" to the right and bring up at **2**.



STRAIGHT STITCH/ RUNNING STITCH ▲

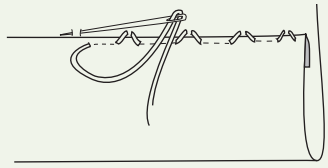
Working from right to left, make a straight stitch by bringing the needle up and insert at **1**, ⅛–¼" from the starting point. To make a line of running stitches (a row of straight stitches worked one after the other), bring the needle up at **2** and repeat.

SQUARE KNOT ▼

Working with two cords (or threads), make a loop from the right cord (pinch the cords together at the base of the loop between thumb and forefinger), then thread the left cord through the loop from bottom to top. Bring the left cord toward you and wrap it under and around the base of the right loop and then thread it through the loop from top to bottom. Pull the cords tight.

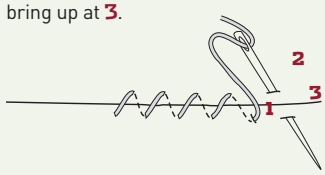
UNEVEN SLIP STITCH /SLIP-STITCH HEMMING ▼

After securing the thread in the fold, take a small stitch in the garment or outer fabric, picking up only a few threads of the fabric. Then, take a stitch, about ¼" long, in the fold, across from the stitch in the garment/ outer fabric. Continue, alternating between tiny stitches in the garment/outer fabric and longer stitches in the fold.



WHIPSTITCH ▼

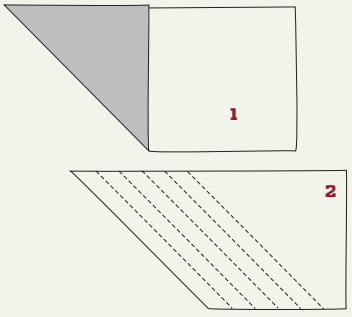
Bring the needle up at **1**, insert at **2**, and bring up at **3**.



CREATE BINDING

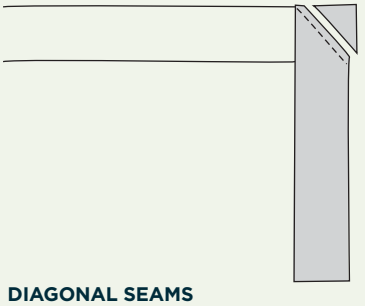
CUTTING STRAIGHT STRIPS

Cut strips on the crosswise grain, from selvedge to selvedge, cutting to the width indicated in the project instructions. Use a rotary cutter and straightedge to obtain a straight cut. Remove the selvedges and join the strips with diagonal seams.



CUTTING BIAS STRIPS ▲

Cut strips to the width indicated in the project instructions. Fold one cut end of the fabric to meet one selvedge, forming a fold at a 45-degree angle to the selvedge. With the fabric placed on a self-healing mat, cut off the fold with a rotary cutter, using a straightedge as a guide to make a straight cut. With the straightedge and rotary cutter, cut strips to the appropriate width. Join the strips with diagonal seams.



DIAGONAL SEAMS FOR JOINING STRIPS ▲

Lay two strips right sides together, at right angles. The area where the strips overlap forms a square. Sew diagonally across the square as shown above. Trim the excess fabric ¼" away from the seam line and press the seam allowances open. Repeat to join all the strips, forming one long fabric band.

FOLD BINDING ▼

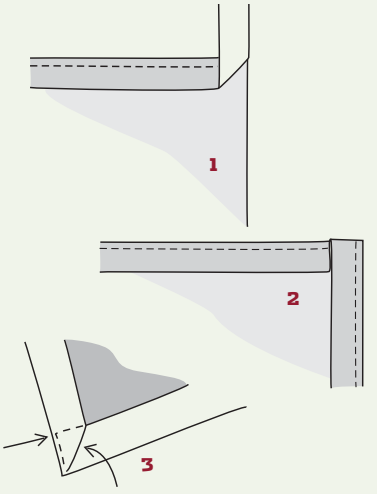
A. Double-fold Binding This option will create binding that is similar to packaged double-fold bias tape/binding. Fold the strip in half lengthwise, with wrong sides together; press. Open up the fold and then fold each long edge toward the wrong side, so that the raw edges meet in the middle (**1**). Refold the binding along the existing center crease, enclosing the raw edges (**2**), and press again.

B. Double-layer Binding This option creates a double-thickness binding with only one fold. This binding is often favored by quilters. Fold the strip in half lengthwise with wrong sides together; press.

BINDING WITH MITERED CORNERS ▼▶

If using double-layer binding (option B above) follow the alternate italicized instructions in parentheses wherever you see them.

Open the binding and press ½" to the wrong side at one short end *(refold the binding at the center crease and proceed)*. Starting with the folded-under end of the binding, place it near the center of the first edge of the project to be bound, matching the raw edges, and pin in place. Begin sewing near the center of one edge, along the first crease *(at the appropriate distance from the raw edge)*, leaving several inches of the binding fabric free at the beginning. Stop sewing ¼" before reaching the corner, backtack, and cut the threads. Rotate the project 90 degrees to position it for sewing the next side. Fold the binding fabric up, away from the project, at a 45-degree angle (**1**), then fold it back down along the project raw edge (**2**). This forms a miter at the corner. Stitch the second side, beginning at the project raw edge (**2**) and ending ¼" from the next corner, as before. Continue as established until you have completed the last corner. Continue stitching until you are a few inches from the beginning edge of the binding fabric. Overlap the pressed beginning edge of the binding by ½" (or overlap more as necessary for security) and trim the working edge to fit. Finish sewing the binding *(opening the center fold and tucking the raw edge inside the pressed end of the binding strip)*. Refold the binding along all the creases and then fold it over the project raw edges to the back, enclosing the raw edges *(there are no creases to worry about with option B)*. The folded edge of the binding strip should just cover the stitches visible on the project back. Slip-stitch the binding in place, tucking in the corners to complete the miters as you go (**3**).



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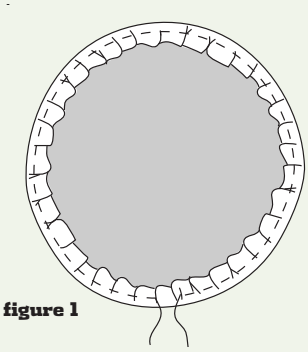


figure 1

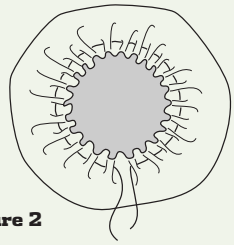


figure 2

MAKING A YO-YO

1 With a fabric marking tool, trace your template onto the wrong side of the yo-yo fabric and cut along the traced line. Repeat to cut the desired number of yo-yo circles.

2 With the wrong side of the yo-yo circle facing up, fold over ¼" along the edge of your circle. With a handsewing needle and thread, sew a running stitch through both layers of fabric, about 1/16–⅛" from the edge. Make sure your thread is long enough to go around the perimeter of the circle with a bit to spare **(figure 1)**. Note: The stitch length determines the size of the center opening in your finished yo-yo. Longer stitches make a more tightly gathered center, while shorter stitches will make the opening larger (which is perfect if you intend to sew a button in the center).

3 Gently pull your thread until the edges gather in the center **(figure 2)**. Continue tightening until the center is tightly gathered. Make a couple of stitches to secure the gathers, then tie a knot.

4 Flatten the yo-yo with your hand to make it lie flat, with the gathered center on top.

5 Repeat Steps 2–4 to make more yo-yos.

SEWING + PRESSING A CURVED SEAM

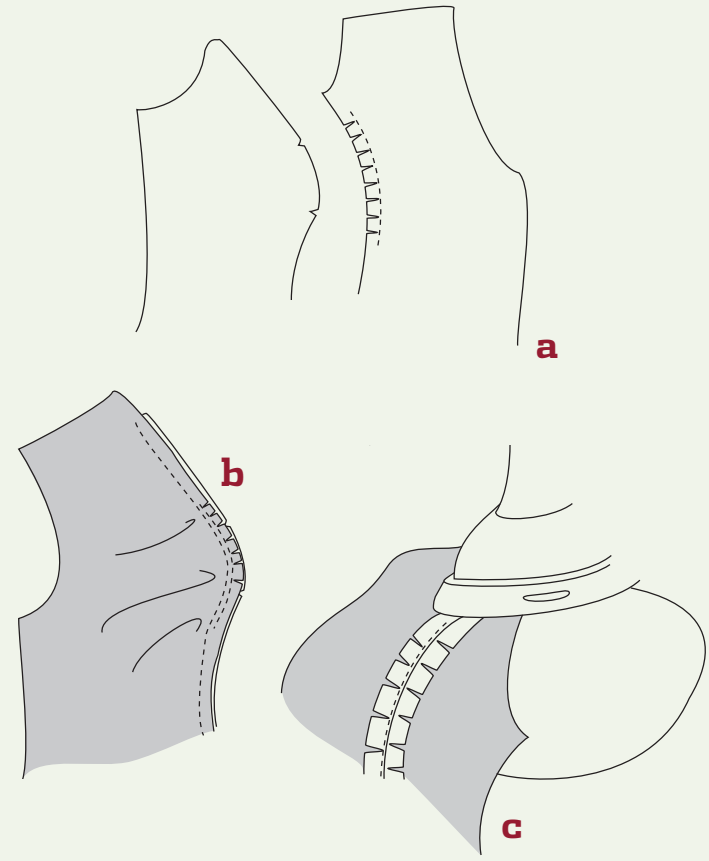
When you first look at two opposing curves (such as on a princess seam), you may think that there's no way they can fit together, but—surprise, surprise—they do. Joining a concave and convex curve takes a little know-how for a smooth seam.

Sew a line of stitching just inside the seamline on the concave curve and clip into the seam allowance every ⅜" (1 cm), stopping short of the stitching **a**. (Use the pattern notches as a guide for the curved section and stitch between them.)

Spread the curve apart and pin it right sides together with the convex section, matching the notches. Stitch the seam with the clipped side facing up, sewing just beyond the reinforcement stitching **b**.

Press the seam open over a pressing ham (a stuffed hamlike shape) to avoid flattening the curve you just made. If needed, clip out some fullness on the convex side to make the seam lie flat **c**.

TIP Don't remember your high school geometry? Concave is a hollow inward curve (think of a cave); convex is an outer curve.

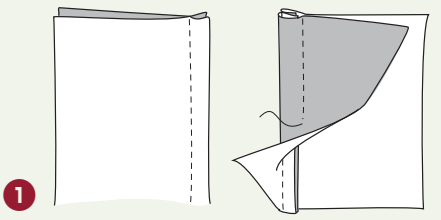


sewing basics

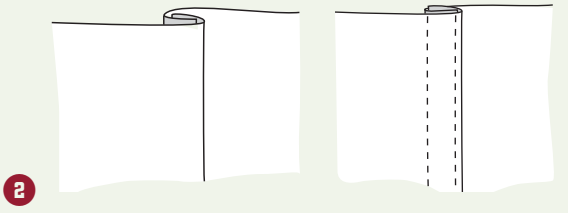
how-to: SEAMS & HEMS

French and flat-fell are self-finished seams that protect the raw edges of the seam allowance from abrasion. Use a Hong Kong finish or triple-stitched hem for unlined silk garments. For lined garments, finish seam allowances by pinking or use a zigzag stitch.

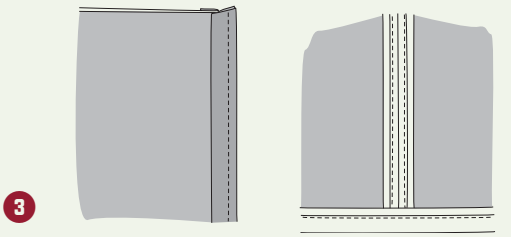
1 FRENCH SEAM Pin the pieces wrong sides together and stitch a ⅜" straight seam. Trim the seam allowances to ⅛". Fold the fabric right sides together along the stitched seam and press. Stitch along the original seamline (now ¼" from the fold), encasing the raw edges. Press the seam to one side.



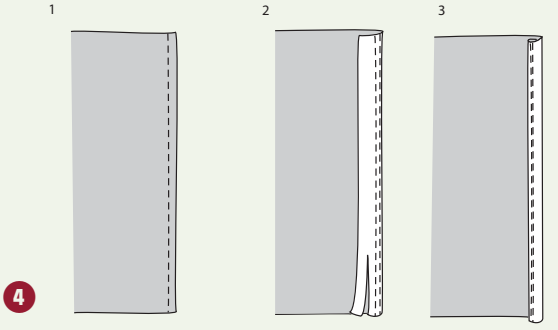
2 FLAT-FELL SEAM Fold the seam allowance over toward the right side on one piece and toward the wrong side on the adjoining piece. Insert the folds into each other so that both pieces are facing right side up (see below, both raw edges are now encased and hidden). Edgestitch along each fold to finish. (See a Web tutorial on sewing flat-fell seams at sewdaily.com.)



3 HONG KONG FINISH Using 1"-wide bias strips, place a bias strip right sides together with one seam allowance, raw edges aligned. Keeping the other seam allowance and garment fabric out of the way, sew with a ¼" seam allowance. Press the bias strip over the seam and then fold it over the seam allowance edge to the back (no need to turn under the raw edge of the bias strip; it will be left exposed on the underside of the seam allowance). Pin in place, then stitch in the ditch from the right side of the seam allowance to secure the underside of the binding in place.



4 TRIPLE-STITCHED HEM Stitch ¼" from the raw edge, then press 3/16" toward the wrong side so that the line of stitches runs near the edge of the fold (1/16"). Stitch ⅛" from the folded edge, then trim the raw edge close to this second stitch line. Roll the hem toward the wrong side to enclose the raw edge (one row of stitching will still be visible). Finish by stitching once more directly over the visible stitch line.



SETTING IN A SLEEVE

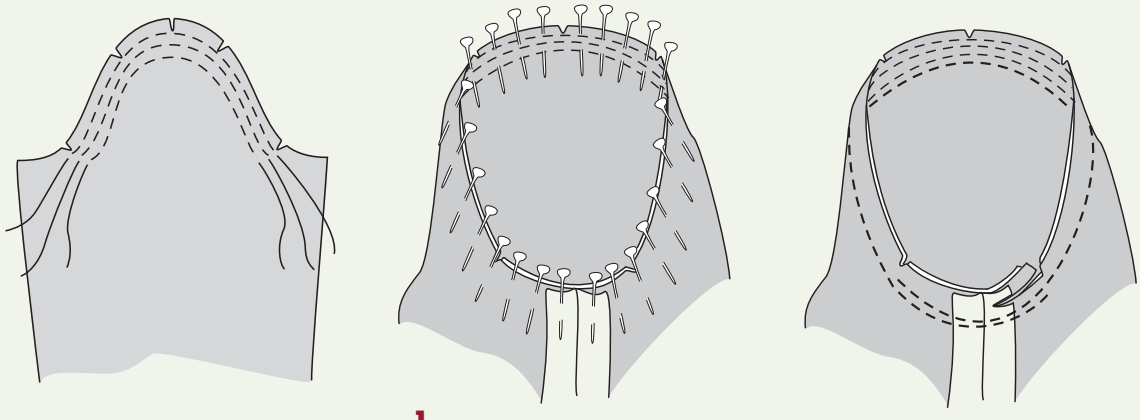
This is another of those "who thought this up?" sewing challenges—the idea that a seemingly much larger curved piece (the sleeve) has to fit into what appears to be a much smaller hole (the armhole). A set-in sleeve should have a smooth cap without any wrinkles or tucks. To accomplish this, you need to "ease" the cap fullness to fit. Similar to gathering, easing evenly distributes fullness without any gathers.

Stitch three rows of basting between the sleeve notches, one on the seamline and the others 1/4" on each side **a**; leave thread tails long enough to pull.

Pin the sleeve into the armhole, right sides together matching the notches, dots (if applicable), and underarm seams. Pin at the underarm seam, center cap notch, and the front (single) and back (double) notches. Gently pull on the ease-stitching bobbin threads to pull up the excess fullness to fit the armhole, making sure that the fullness is eased evenly within each segment (between the initial pins) and then pin the rest of the sleeve in place, leaving no tucks or pleats along the seamline **b.** On natural fibers, use the tip of the iron to help steam out any excess, but don't press the sleeve area flat.

With the sleeve side up, begin stitching at one notch, continuing down through the underarm area and around the sleeve cap, carefully manipulating the upper sleeve fullness with your fingers as you stitch to avoid puckers. Just go slowly and be vigilant to keep the extra sleeve fullness evenly distributed between the notches as you sew.

As you come back to where you began sewing, shift the stitching to the inside seam allowance 1/8" (3 mm) and stitch back to the other notch. Trim the lower armhole area close to the second line of stitching **c**. Don't trim the upper sleeve seams because the seam allowances help the sleeve cap fit properly. On ravel-prone fabrics, zigzag or serge the seam allowance edges together.



a b c